

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

The attached "Replacement Sheets" of drawings include changes to Figures 1-8. The attached "Replacement Sheets," which include Figures 1-8, replace the original sheets including Figures 1-8.

Attachment: Replacement Sheets

REMARKS

Claims 1-7 are now pending in the application. Claim 7 has been added herewith. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejection in view of the amendments and remarks contained herein.

DRAWINGS

The drawings stand objected to for certain informalities. Applicant has attached revised drawings for the Examiner's approval. In the "Replacement Sheets," cross-hatching has been added for the shaft and housing in Figures 1-8, as described in the specification.

Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection of the drawings.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Jackowski et al (U.S. Pat. No. 4448426). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

At the outset, Applicant notes that claim 1, has been amended to include the limitations of "a retainer portion slidably mounted to the sleeve portion in a radial interference fit and adapted to mount to the second member; and

a seal portion mounted to said retainer portion and engaging said sleeve portion; wherein said retainer portion is disengaged from said sleeve portion during assembly of said sleeve portion on to said first member." The reference to Jackowski discloses a unitized oil seal including a sleeve portion mounted to the shaft 114 and a

seal portion adapted to mount to a second member 22. However, Jackowski does not disclose the sliding engagement between the retainer portion and the sleeve portion that is disengaged during assembly, as claimed. Therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claim 1 are respectfully requested.

Applicant has amended claim 3 to be in independent form, including the limitations of claim 1. Claim 3 includes the limitations of "the sleeve portion is adapted to install to the first member with a radial interference fit such that the radial interference fit of the seal portion to the sleeve portion creates a greater axial retention load than an axial installation load created by the interference fit of the sleeve portion relative to the first member." Applicant respectfully submits that there is no basis for the Examiner's rejection of previous dependent claim 3. Applicant submits that there is no description in the Jackowski reference that supports the Examiner's position that the sleeve portion of Jackowski is adapted to install to the first member 114 with a radial interference fit such that the radial interference fit of the seal portion to the sleeve portion creates a greater axial retention load than an axial installation load created by the interference fit of the sleeve portion relative to the first member 114. Therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claim 3 are respectfully requested.

With regard to claim 6, Applicant notes that this claim includes the limitations of

"partially installing the axle companion flange into the sleeve portion while generating less axial installation force between the axle companion flange and the sleeve portion than an axial retention load created by the interference fit between the seal portion and the sleeve portion; and

further installing the axle companion flange into the sleeve portion while preventing further axial movement of the sleeve portion relative to the companion flange, to thereby overcome the axial retention load and move the sleeve portion axially relative to the seal portion."

Applicant submits that Jackowski fails to disclose the “partially installing” step and the “further installing” step wherein “further axial movement of the sleeve portion” is prevented to “move the sleeve portion axially relative to the seal portion”, as claimed. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claim 6.

NEW CLAIM

Applicant has added new independent claim 7 which includes the limitations of

“a sleeve portion adapted to mount rotationally fixed to the first member, said sleeve including an outer surface having a ramp portion disposed between an axially extending forward portion and an axially extending rear portion, wherein said axially extending forward portion has a smaller diameter than said axially extending rear portion; and
a seal portion mounted to the sleeve portion in a radial interference fit and including a retainer portion adapted to mount to the second member, said seal portion including a first seal lip engaging said axially extending forward portion and a second seal lip engaging said axially extending rear portion.”

Applicant submits that Jackowski does not disclose a sleeve with a ramp portion between an axially extending smaller diameter forward portion and a larger diameter axially extending rear portion, wherein the seal portion includes a first seal lip engaging the smaller diameter forward portion and a second seal lip engaging the larger diameter rear portion, as claimed. Therefore, claim 7 should be in condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action and the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: June 9, 2008

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